

Christian Education

Sin 101: Basic Word Pictures

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Sin. A word with only three letters. A small word. Yet, a word that people do not like to use. A word whose meaning can be explained with many thoughts and actions. A word that can stir up emotions and a guilty conscience. Simply put, sin is disobeying God. Sin is a disregard for the word and the ways of God. Sin is the failure to live up to the standards of God.

God gave us His word to help us. When He created mankind, He gave us a wonderful privilege and responsibility: free will. We were created with the freedom to make choices. With this freedom comes either the rewards or the consequences of the choices we make. The Good News is that God gave us instructions, the Bible, because He wants us to choose well and be successful.



Fill in the blanks of the following verses found at Deuteronomy 11:26-28a, HCSB³:

“Look, today I set before you a _____ and a _____: (there will be) a blessing, if you _____ the _____ of the LORD your God I am giving you today, and a curse, if you _____ _____ obey the commands of the LORD your God....”

Moses is sharing what God instructed him to say. These words were spoken to the people of Israel, the people of God. The truth, in principle, applies to us today. The blessing is good favor from God and good results. The curse is a bad end, or the doom for not obeying the word of God. Unfortunately, we have all chosen at one time or another to disobey the word of God. God said, *“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not My ways”* (Isaiah 55:8,

HCSB). That means we sometimes view right as wrong and wrong as right; or, good as bad and bad as good. Is there a wrong in your life that you have convinced yourself is *sooo* right and good?

Complete the following verses:

Isaiah 53:6a, HCSB: *We all went _____ like _____; we all have turned to our own way....*

Romans 3:23, HCSB: *For all have _____ and fall short of the glory of _____.*



When we sin, we do not meet the high standards of God. When we sin, we fall short of the perfection God desires for us. When we sin, we fail to achieve the best possible results for our lives. Those failures have a negative impact in the home, in school, in business, and in society. And, we are all guilty.



Many words are used in the Bible to identify sin. Some of the other words used for sin are error, iniquity, unrighteousness, wickedness, evil, trespass, wrong, transgression, and disobey. Some of the original Hebrew and Greek words that are translated into English have a history of usage that paint pictures for us to better understand sin. These are *word pictures*.

The most common words in the Hebrew and Greek languages, *chata - chattah - hamartia*, which are translated as sin, have the root meaning “to miss the mark”. These are words we would associate with archery or target practice. Every

target has a bulls eye, that which the shooter is aiming to hit. “To miss the mark” means to miss the bulls eye. This is a word picture of sin. To sin and miss the mark is to miss the best course of action. To miss means to get less than the best.



Fill in the blanks of Proverbs 14:12, HCSB.

*There is a _____ that seems _____ to a man, but
its _____ is the way of _____.*

Recall a time when you “missed the mark” with a choice you made and suffered hardship as a result. Write on the lines below what would have been the best choice to make, the one which would be approved by God.



Another word picture that describes sin is trespass. Most everyone has seen a “No Trespassing” sign. These signs are posted to tell people to not enter a particular area or a particular piece of property. In other words, the owner is saying to others that they have no business coming onto his land. Every piece of property has boundary lines. To cross over a forbidden boundary line is trespassing.

God has given us in the Bible boundary lines for living. These boundary lines teach where we are safe to live life and what areas we should not explore because those areas will hurt our life. Crossing godly boundary lines is leaving the safety of God’s protection and trespassing into unsafe and hurtful ways.

The real danger of trespassing is the possibility of getting shot. The Apostle Paul, writing to the church in Ephesus, tells us about the reality of trespassing against God, His word and His ways:

And you were _____ in your _____ and sins
(Ephesians 2:1, HCSB).

A third word picture of sin is very simple, breaking the law. Just as societies have laws so does God. Laws are intended to give people guidance regarding what



can and cannot be done. When people all obey the law then everyone is living according to the same standards and no one is being taken advantage of. To break the law is to not abide by the law, to not live according to the law. Breaking the law can have serious consequences. When caught, there may be a fine to

pay, the loss of privileges, such as driving, or even jail time. But breaking the law can have even worse consequences, someone may get injured or even killed. Others may have to do without items stolen or items damaged. Family members of the law breaker also suffer.

All of this is also true regarding sin. To break the law of God is to sin. And sin has serious consequences that not only affect the sinner, but also affect those who are associated with the sinner. Indeed, not only does the sinner and his family have to deal with the consequences of sin, so does society as well as any person or persons who might have been victims of the sin committed.

The law of God is sometimes identified as, but not limited to, the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are located in two places in the Bible.

They are first given by God in Exodus 20. Later, as Moses is recalling God's kindness toward Israel, he restates the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 5. Using Exodus 20, complete the Ten Commandments.

- (1) *Do not have other _____ besides Me (Exodus 20:3, HCSB)*
- (2) *Do not make an _____ for yourself (Exodus 20:4, HCSB)*
- (3) *Do not misuse the _____ of the LORD your God, because God will _____ anyone who misuses His name (Exodus 20:7, HCSB)*
- (4) *Remember to _____ the _____ day: you are to _____ six days and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God (Exodus 20:8-10a, HCSB)*
- (5) *Honor your _____ and _____ so that you may have a long _____ in the land that the LORD your God is giving you (Exodus 20:12, HCSB)*
- (6) *Do not _____ (Exodus 20:13, HCSB)*
- (7) *Do not commit _____ (Exodus 20:14, HCSB)*
- (8) *Do not _____ (Exodus 20:15, HCSB)*
- (9) *Do not give _____ against your neighbor (Exodus 20:16, HCSB)*
- (10) *Do not _____ your neighbor's _____....or anything that belongs to your neighbor (Exodus 20:17, HCSB)*



The Ten Commandments are part of the laws or expectations of God for how life is to be lived. Review the commandments and list the total number of commandments you have at one time or another broken:

_____.

We are all guilty of breaking the law of God. Jesus revealed how difficult the law is to keep when He said, *“You have heard that it was said, Do not commit adultery. But I tell you, everyone who looks at a woman to lust*

for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matthew 5:27-28, HCSB). What that means is that sin occurs in the heart whether or not a person actually carries out the thought and plan of the heart. The standards by which God expects us to live life are nothing less than holy and pure through and through. Sadly, we are all stained with sin and guilty before God.

A fourth word picture of sin is darkness. To live in sin is to live in darkness. When we live in darkness, with no light, we cannot see. Maybe you have been on a cave tour when the tour guide turned off all the lights. The darkness is so thick you cannot even see the tip of your nose. And so everyone stays very still. Moving about in such darkness is



dangerous. Even with a little light, walking from room to room at night is dangerous. Most people have experienced walking into something, knocking something over, or stubbing a toe. Ouch!

Living in the darkness is the same as walking blind. While most people can see, we have all walked in the darkness of sin and blindly ended up hurting ourselves and others in the process. We never saw that coming. Perhaps you have heard the saying, “Hindsight is 20/20”, meaning a careful examination of our past reveals where we made our mistakes. If only we could see so clearly today with regard to the choices and decisions we have to make. Name three issues in your life today that you are considering and have to make a decision on very soon.

(1) _____ (2) _____ (3) _____

Here is Good News: Our foresight can also be 20/20 when we consult with God and His word before finalizing any decisions. The Bible teaches that God is Light and that the light of His word can help us avoid such hurtful ways.

John wrote, *God is light, and there is absolutely no darkness in Him* (1 John 1:5b)

The Psalmist declared, *Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path* (Psalm 119:105, HCSB).



Whether or not you know your way around in the Bible, you can begin now seeking answers to your questions. Here is a little tip: If the issue involves any aspect of breaking God's law, then that is to be avoided. For example, our emotions and the suggestions of friends may be saying *this feels right*, but God never approves and blesses the liar, the thief, the adulterer, the sinner in his sin. In the back of many Bibles is a concordance, which is similar to an index of topics. Look up words associated with your circumstances and then read the referenced passages in the Bible. Coupled with prayer, this is a good place to start.

God, through His word, may be directing you to do something that seems odd or uncomfortable. Be sure you are understanding His word rightly. Seek clarification or affirmation from the Scriptures or from someone well versed in the Scriptures. If in fact God is leading you, and you are uncomfortable, that is okay. We have been challenged to trust Him and live by faith, relying on God, His word, His ways, and His promises. God will never steer us wrong. He wants what is best for us. He wants us to succeed in living a meaningful and fulfilling life.

The problem with sin, no matter what word picture we use, whether missing the mark, trespassing, breaking the law, or walking in darkness, is that sin robs us of the best in life and hinders a right relationship with God and our fellow man. Every sin has consequences. At first thought we might say that not every sin has the same consequences. The sin of lying and the sin of murder have different consequences. The sin of stealing and the sin of dishonoring a parent have different consequences. The sin of drunkenness and the sin of breaking the

Sabbath day have different consequences. But, let us not forget who determines the penalty for sin. God. God is the righteous Judge. Complete the following verses to learn the consequences of sin and the solution to sin.

Romans 6:23, HCSB: *For the wages of sin is _____, but the _____ of God is _____ life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

1 John 1:9, HCSB: *If we _____ our sins, He is faithful and righteousness to _____ us our sins and to _____ us from all unrighteousness.*

John 3:16, HCSB: *For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.*

God blessed mankind with free will. Mankind sinned. The penalty for sin is eternal separation, death, from God. And the Good News: God loves us and sent Jesus to save us from the penalty of sin. Ask Him to forgive you and bless you with a new beginning, a fresh start. Then commit to following Him and His word.

Read and then check mark the following to complete this study:

Psalm 32 Psalm 51 Luke 6:20-49

Foot Notes

¹ *Brother Blooper* is a weekly by Dennis Daniel as seen at <http://bpnews.net/BPfun.asp?ID=BB>.

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